

3. 43
*Objections against days of fasting and
prayer stated and answered,*

I N A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

W A R
WITH
FRANCE and SPAIN,

PREACHED AT

CROUCHED-FRIARS,

JANUARY 9, 1744-5.

Being the Day appointed by HIS MAJESTY
for a PUBLIC FAST.

By GEORGE BENSON, D.D.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart* in *Cheapside*; R. KING, at the *Bible and Crown* in *Fore-Street*; J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's Head* in *Gracechurch-Street*; and M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noster-Row*. MDCCXLV.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

Office of the
Secretary of the Navy

1871

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON



ISAIAH lviii. 6, 7.

*Is not this the fast that I have chosen?
to loose the bands of wickedness, to
undo the heavy burthens, and to
let the oppressed go free, and that
you break every yoke?*

*Is it not to deal thy bread to the hun-
gry, and that thou bring the poor
that are cast out, to thy house?
when thou seeest the naked, that
thou cover him; and that thou
hide not thyself from thine own
flesh?*



WE find that, when the children ^{2 Chron.}
of Moab, Ammon, and others, ^{xx. 1.}
came against Jehoshaphat to
battle; he was afraid, and set
himself to seek the Lord, and
proclaimed a fast throughout
all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves
A 2 toge-

Objections against days of fasting

together to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of *Judah* they came [to *Jerusalem*] to seek the Lord.—And, in the following part of the same chapter, it appears that their fasting and praying were acceptable unto God; that he heard their prayers, and granted them victory over their enemies.

Jeremiah
xxxvi. 1,
&c.

AGAIN; it is recorded that the Lord said unto *Jeremiah*, “Take a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken against *Israel* and against *Judah*, and against all the nations, from the day I [first] spake unto thee, even unto this day. It may be that the house of *Judah* will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may turn every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” Then *Jeremiah* (being in prison) said unto *Baruch*, “I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Therefore go thou and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people, in the Lord’s house, upon the fasting day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all *Judah* that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will turn every one from his evil way. For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people.”

Baruch

Baruch read what *Jeremiah* had writ, and King *Jehoiakim* took it and threw it into the fire; and sought to apprehend both *Baruch* and the prophet. He and his people despised the admonition, and accordingly fell into the hands of their enemies, and suffered in a remarkable manner. I am not going to run a paralel, in all these particulars, between the case of the *Jews*, in antient times, and the present state of our nation. But would have you observe, from the two cases that have been mentioned, from this whole chapter where the text is, and from the reason and nature of things, that when fasting and prayer promote moral virtue, or holiness of heart and life, they then render us acceptable to God. And, in that way alone, can men reasonably hope for the divine blessing.

Tho' these things appear so evident; yet some persons seem to doubt as to the necessity or expediency of complying with the calls of our civil Governors to those religious exercises of *fasting* and *prayer*. It may be proper and of some service, therefore, to take notice of their objections.

(1.) It is said, " that *Religion* is not a civil
 " affair; and therefore our legislators have
 " no right to appoint either feasts or fasts.
 " *Jesus Christ* is sole lawgiver in his church:
 " And, if he had appointed such a thing,
 " his disciples ought to have obeyed. But;
 " as

6 *Objections against days of fasting*

“ as he hath not, no power upon earth hath
 “ a right to make laws that shall be binding
 “ upon the consciences of Christians.”

To which it may be answered that, in the affairs of religion and conscience, we ought to acknowledge no human authority. But, if things be right and reasonable in themselves, the disciples of Jesus may and ought to observe them. If any thing was enjoined by the civil magistrate that broke in upon the rights of conscience, or tended to infringe that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, it is our duty not to comply, but bravely to bear our testimony against it at the hazard of all we have in the world, and even of life itself. But, when our superiors recommend that, which we may observe in our own way; and against which, upon other accounts, we have no material objection; it would be obstinacy and affected singularity not to comply with such a proposal. And we must needs think ourselves concerned in the public welfare, as much as our neighbors and the rest of the nation.

OBJ. II. “ Some may say, that all warlike
 “ preparations are highly proper; but what
 “ can other things signifie?”

To this it may be justly answered, that an over-ruling providence ought to be acknowledged and taken into the account; otherwise all our preparations can avail nothing. The race is not always to the swift,
 nor

nor the battle to the strong. Many strange revolutions have happened in *Europe*, within these few years past; and who can tell what shall be the situation of things a few years hence? The proudest and most aspiring monarch may be humbled, and the lowly exalted. The power and the might and the battle and the victory are the Lord's, and he giveth them to whomsoever he pleaseth. The whole creation is in his hand, and every thing in it intirely at his disposal. He commandeth the winds and the waves; raiseth tempests, and stilleth the raging sea, as well as the tumult of the nations. He can easily prosper the attempts of the weak, and baffle the counsels of the deepest politicians, and the strength of the largest armies. He can secure our navy from storms and tempests, and give successe in the day of battle. He can send discord into the cabinet, the camp, or the fleet of our enemies, and make our hands strong, and our hearts couragious. It is therefore highly fit and meet to acknowledge him, whose kingdom ruleth over all.

OBJ. III. "Some have particularly objected against *fasting*, as a thing that can neither be acceptable unto God, nor of any benefit to mankind." As to which it hath been very justly observed, that the prayers of good men are not lesse acceptable to God, after they have taken their necessary food, than when they are fasting. But, in the first place,

Objections against days of fasting

place, by fasting, all abuse of meats and drinks and all excesses are prevented; which is highly proper, when men approach God in solemn acts of worship: and more especially fit for those who fare sumptuously every day; which is the case of many in and about this great city.

In the next place, the people are, by this mean, made more attentive to what they are about, and the more incited to mind their duty. And *fasting* has the same effect upon them with other bodily services, such as standing or kneeling, the *Jews* praying towards the temple, and the like; --- all which things move and affect mankind much more, than if they were to perform divine worship merely within their own minds; tho' it is the mind alone which God regards. --- AGAIN; the devotion, and consequently the repentance and holiness of some persons, is promoted by abstinence or fasting; and such persons ought to take this method, because it is an help and advantage to them. But, as all the means of virtue ought to be esteemed in an exact proportion to their promoting the great end, viz. right temper and life: they, who find total abstinence on such a day to hinder their devotion instead of helping it, ought only to lessen the usual quantity of their food, and in that way humble themselves before the Lord. But to indulge to excess,

and to indulge to excess, or

Mat. vi.
2; 5; 16.

repentance and personal virtue. As that was the reward they sought, that was all the reward they were to have. The meaning of ver. 4. seems to be different from what is represented in our translation, viz. * "You shall [i. e. *you ought to*] fast for strife and debate; or that you may cease from strife and debate, and from smiting with the fist of wickedness." Ver. 5, &c. a loud voice in prayer or lamentation, an afflicting the soul, hanging down the head, wearing sackcloth, lying down upon the ground in dust and ashes; --- all these were actually practised by the Jews, but signified nothing without the practice of justice and charity, which they were designed to promote. But, if they would have fasted and prayed, with a view to become better men; then, amidst all their dark and threatening appearances, their light would have broke forth like the morning; their righteousness would have led the van, and gone in the front of the army, and protected them from all evil: and the glory of the Lord would have brought up the rear; so that being defended behind and before, no enemy would have been able to hurt them. And, in other lofty and figurative expressions, the prophet intimates the settled peace, plenty and tranquility, which would have followed upon their becoming sincerely pious and virtuous.

And,

* Vid. Cleric. in loc.

And, if we fast with a view to humble ourselves before God for our own sins, to mortifie pride, vanity, or any other vice or folly; to be more liberal to the poor and needy; and to be more strict in the observation of every divine precept; how can such a fast be reckoned superstitious or ridiculous? or what is there unreasonable or unbecoming therein?

OBJ. IV. " As some have objected against
" *fasting*, so others have objected against *pray-*
" *er*. They allege that all things go on in
" one stated course, just as they were fixed
" in creation: that good men and bad
" are alike involved in famine and pestilence,
" in storms and shipwrecks, in wars and
" invasions: that *christian* nations have no
" more peace than the *Jews* of old, or
" than the *Heathens* and *Mahometans* have
" now a days: that *Protestants* are as much
" exposed as *Papists*; and good princes and
" virtuous nations, as the tyrants and op-
" pressors of mankind, or the nations who
" choose slavery, and abound in all manner
" of ignorance and wickedness; --- that,
" therefore, it is a vain thing to pray unto
" God, and to humble ourselves before him.
" Our prayers cannot move the almighty,
" nor our days of fasting and humiliation
" have any effect upon his counsels or ac-
" tions. Tho', therefore, all warlike pre-
" parations are highly wise and reasonable;

Objections against days of fasting

“ yet praying, with a view to conquer our
 “ enemies, is a mere idle notion, fit only
 “ for Priests to defend, whose business
 “ it is to amuse and enslave the minds of
 “ men; and fit for none but the giddy,
 “ thoughtless multitude to attend to and
 “ observe. They, indeed, know no better.
 “ They look upon God, as a King or great
 “ man, who sits upon a throne in heaven,
 “ and looks down upon all the children of
 “ men; who is moved by the importunity of
 “ those who earnestly cry unto him for help,
 “ and who may be persuaded into other
 “ measures than those he had designed to
 “ pursue. Whereas mortal men can nei-
 “ ther inform nor move the almighty. If
 “ he knows that peace is proper for us, he
 “ is infinite in wisdom and power, and abun-
 “ dant in goodness, and he will grant us
 “ an honorable and lasting peace and tran-
 “ quility. But, if he is determined to visit
 “ us with war or invasion; if he will
 “ suffer our trade to be interrupted, or to
 “ go into other channels, and visit other cli-
 “ mates; so he will do; and it is not our
 “ using prayers or intreaties that can stop
 “ the hand of heaven, or have any effect
 “ upon the almighty. For he is of one
 “ mind, and who can turn him? and what-
 “ soever his soul desireth, that he doth; for
 “ he will accomplish all his pleasure.”

Now

Now as to this, and all objections of the like nature, it may justly be granted that we cannot inform God of any thing, as if he was before that ignorant, and after our mentioning it to him, he was then perfectly acquainted with it. For God knows all things of himself before we mention them, and that much more perfectly than we can describe them, or even know them. Neither can our prayers have any influence upon God, unless they first have a proper influence upon us, to render us truly penitent for our sins, thankful for our mercies, and careful for the future to know and do the good and holy and acceptable will of God.

God, the wise and universal creator, hath so settled the plan of providence, that virtue leads to happiness, and vice to misery. Now prayer is a mean to virtue, and as such is itself a virtue, which ought carefully and conscientiously to be practised.

The Jews, indeed, were under a *Theocracy*, and frequently had extraordinary and miraculous interpositions in their favor, when they kept free from idolatry, and the vices which it drew after it. Now such miraculous interpositions we are not to expect. But it is true, in all instances, that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is the reproach, and threatens the ruine of any people. And, under the New Testament, godliness

Objections against days of fasting

lineſſe hath the promiſe of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

It is true, future and eternal rewards in another world are the great things which chriſtians are principally to regard. But it is alſo to be remembered that the conſtitution of this world is wiſe, and that virtue tends to proſperity, and vice to miſery, even in the preſent ſtate. Thus the plan of creation muſt appear to every thinking perſon to be truly rational and noble. -- AGAIN; God hath not hindered himſelf, by the plan of creation, from interpoſing in an extraordinary manner, in ſome particular and remarkable circumſtances. Nay, wherever it is wiſe and proper to interpoſe, we may depend upon it, that God was always determined to do ſo, and will actually do it. -- But, in caſes, to which the plan of creation reaches not, and the divine interpoſure would not be wiſe and proper; there we are to conſider the grand ſcheme of providence as reaching forward into an everlaſting ſtate and world; where (not whole nations indeed, but) all righteous and penitent perſons, of every kindred and nation, ſhall be made perfectly and forever happy; and the wicked of all nations puniſhed according to their deſerts. -- As therefore *prayer* evidently promotes righteouſneſſe; and in conſequence of that renders us meet objects of the divine favor and bleſſing; ſo far it cannot juſtly be objected
againſt

against, or be deemed a vain and fruitlesse thing. On the contrary, it must inspire a people with zeal and bravery, firmly to believe that their cause is right in the sight of God; and that in a just cause, carried on by lawful methods, they may depend upon the divine blessing.

OBJ. FIFTH AND LAST. "It may again
" be objected that, when days of fasting
" and humiliation are observed, there is
" little or no reformation of the vici-
" ous effected thereby. Every one is ready
" to complain of the wickednesse of others;
" and will, without scruple or hesitation,
" confesse the sins of the nation in general,
" or of men of such and such ranks and
" stations, or of different sects and parties
" in matters of religion. *For instance,* great
" men and governors will readily complain
" of the idlenesse and vice of the lower part
" of mankind, that they are factious and se-
" ditious, giddy and unmanageable, prone to
" change, tho' it be for the worse; never
" long easy with any governor or any form
" of government, but fond of revolutions;
" tho' they end in ruine and slavery.

" The people, on the other hand, will
" readily acknowledge that (tho' the king
" can do no wrong; yet) some persons in
" power have been too covetous and aspiring;
" that they have been for burthening the peo-
" ple with many and heavy taxes; as if the
" art

“ art of government chiefly consisted in a
 “ skill to raise the revenues to the greatest
 “ height; that they have been for carrying
 “ the royal prerogative too great a length;
 “ and for bearing hard upon the trading
 “ world, and such as have stood up for the
 “ liberties of the nation; that they scarce
 “ have scrupled any methods to bring the
 “ people into a slavish subjection and de-
 “ pendence; or at least have not duely con-
 “ sulted the ease and liberties and welfare of
 “ the nation.

“ The city will freely and warmly in-
 “ veigh against the court; and represent it
 “ as a place that effeminates the minds of
 “ men, and greatly indangers their virtue;
 “ that some of our nobility and gentry have
 “ departed from that honest bravery and true
 “ *English* spirit, for which their ancestors
 “ were so much renowned; and have affected
 “ the manners and followed the fashions of
 “ some of our greatest enemies, and of the
 “ most foppish, voluptuous and effeminate
 “ courts and nations; - - - that they have spent
 “ high, and paid their honest tradesmen and
 “ dependents but very indifferently: that they
 “ have run out great estates, by being above
 “ looking into their own accounts; till they
 “ have become dependent on the crown, and
 “ obliged to fall into all its measures, to keep
 “ up that external show of grandeur, which
 “ they have have thought necessary to persons
 “ of

“ of their quality ; that they have been insati-
“ ably fond of pleasures and diversions, and
“ have led the nation into that false and de-
“ structive taste ; that they have been much
“ addicted to gaming and debauchery, and ex-
“ travagancies of various kinds ; that in public
“ affairs they have been excessively guilty of
“ bribery and corruption ; till by their ex-
“ ample and influence that leaven hath spread
“ thro’ the nation, and there are few votes
“ to be had, places of profit and preferment
“ to be obtained, or public affairs to be trans-
“ acted, without it. The court, in return,
“ will readily condemn the city, and allege
“ that the citizens grow too rich and inso-
“ lent, full of pride, covetousness, luxury,
“ fraud and oppression ; that, as by their
“ large and extensive trade they have such
“ an abundance of wealth flowing in upon
“ them, they grow vain and ambitious, at-
“ tempting to rival their superiors in dresse
“ and furniture, in gaiety, pomp and splen-
“ dor ; not keeping that due distance which
“ inferiors ought evermore to observe.

“ Men of a libertine and licentious turn
“ of mind will most readily cry out against
“ priest-craft, and damn the bigots of all
“ parties ; but especially those who set up for
“ the teachers and instructors of mankind.
“ They will allege that they use religion
“ as a cloak for ambition and lust of power
“ and dominion, and are evermore study-

Objections against days of fasting

“ ing how to make a gain of godlineſſe.
 “ With this view they will ſubſcribe articles
 “ which they do not believe, and devoutly
 “ make uſe of prayers of which they do not
 “ heartily approve. They will flatter Princes
 “ in their vices, or at leaſt connive at them;
 “ and aſſiſt the civil magiſtrate to inſlave the
 “ people, that they themſelves may ſhare
 “ in the ſpoils of perſecution and arbitrary
 “ power; that the morals of ſome of them
 “ have been bad, and ſome of their doctrines
 “ the moſt abſurd and ridiculous. And, if
 “ we were to reckon up all the idle and ab-
 “ ſurd notions they have propagated, and
 “ the tyranny and ſlavery, the perſecution
 “ and amazing cruelty, which they have fo-
 “ mented, it might be queſtioned whether
 “ they have not done infinitely more harm
 “ than good.

“ *Eccleſiaſtics*, in return, will not fail
 “ to complain of the licentiousneſſe and
 “ infidelity of the age, of the ſhameful
 “ neglect of religion and public worſhip;
 “ of the little reverence which is paid to
 “ them and their ſacred order; and of the
 “ great abounding of all manner of vice and
 “ wickedneſſe. --- Some of the clergy, who
 “ are dignified with high titles, and enriched
 “ with the affluent emoluments of an eſta-
 “ bliſhed church can, with great zeal, pray
 “ againſt the increaſe of *heresy* and *ſchiſm*, in-
 “ tending thereby mens thinking for them-
 “ ſelves

“ selves, and worshiping God according to
“ their own consciences and in their own
“ way. And those, who dissent from the
“ multitude, are very ready to complain
“ of the unjust authority and imposing spirit
“ of some in the establishment; their great
“ zeal for trifling ceremonies, their coldness
“ and formality in the worship of God;
“ their indifference about peace and charity,
“ and the little regard which they manifest
“ towards scrupulous consciences. The sects
“ and persons of more free and generous sen-
“ timents will not scruple to condemn that
“ dictating spirit of infallibility and domi-
“ nion, pride and arrogance, bigotry and
“ uncharitableness, which they observe in
“ those of more narrow sentiments. And
“ the last, in return, will complain aloud of
“ the growth of error and heresie, dam-
“ nable doctrines and dangerous delusions;
“ they will fast and lament the corruption and
“ degeneracy of others; tho’ they (some of
“ them) seldom confesse their own sins, or
“ pray for the pardon of them. AGAIN;
“ the drunkard and the prodigal will freely
“ exclaim against the odious vice of cove-
“ tousness; and the covetous inveigh most
“ bitterly against the profusion, extravagance
“ and luxury of our age and nation. The rich
“ will acknowledge that the poor are saucy and
“ insolent, idle and troublesome; that they
“ will work no longer than they are forced

Objections against days of fasting

“ to it; and that they do not behave with
 “ that modesty, humility, frugality, pru-
 “ dence and industry, which become per-
 “ sons in their station. The poor will tell
 “ you, on the other hand, that the rich are
 “ proud and oppressive, uncharitable, hard-
 “ hearted and cruel; that they live in ease
 “ and splendor themselves, and fare sumptuously every day; but neglect the forceful cries of hunger, and the piercing complaints of those who are ready to perish with cold. Old persons see the errors of youth, and are very warm in censuring their thoughtlessness, extravagance and folly. And youth are very much offended with the moroseness and austerity of old age. Thus every one condemns the vices and follies of others; but what doth this conduce to a national reformation? Or where is the person who observes such a fast, with a view to amend his own faults? If we could perceive such effects, we could have no objection. But such a mutual accusing of one another, and shifting the blame off from ourselves, must rather produce bad effects than good ones, and is itself a vice instead of a virtue.”

Now as to this long and formidable objection, I would observe, that holding up prevailing vices to public view is one of the best means, that I know of, to put all ranks and orders of men in mind of their faults: and the
 more

more they are spoken of, with censure and condemnation, the more likely they are to be repented of and forsaken. Persons of different stations in life, or different parties in religion, should consider what their enemies say of them. If it is false and groundlesse, or if it be in itself no fault, they have no occasion to be moved by it. The conscioussnesse of their own integrity is sufficient to support them against all unjust censures, and encourage them to persevere in the right way. But, as far as the accusations of their adversaries are well-grounded, they ought to be listened to, and lead the guilty to repentance and amendment. --- It is true, every one's first and principal concern is to search into his own conduct, and repent of his own sins. But none of us should be unconcerned for our neighbors and acquaintance, for our countrey, or for the church of God; but should exert ourselves, and do all in our power to promote that righteousness which will secure and exalt our nation; and to put away that sin which must be the reproach and threaten the ruine of any people.

There are some great and national vices, which I could heartily wish to see reformed. It would be exceeding well if those numerous and insnaring oaths, which are required at the custom-house, in taking up the freedom of the city, putting churchwardens and other parish-officers into their office, and the like, were ei-
ther

ther quite abolished, or explained in such a manner, as that conscientious men need not scruple them for fear of incurring the dreadful guilt of perjury. It were also a desirable thing to have the statutes of our universities revised and altered; or the oaths and subscriptions removed, which are required in order to enter into our colleges. For as it is, either our youth know not what those statutes are, which they swear to observe; or, if they know them, they will find them either impracticable, or very difficult to be observed. And yet the oaths to observe them must be repeated once and again by him who would rise to the several degrees of honor and dignity there conferred. The requiring of all the clergy to subscribe to articles of mere human composition, which several of them are thought not thoroughly to believe, and some of which seem not easy to be reconciled with reason and scripture; --- and likewise to make them swear to observe canons, some of which are obsolete, and others very rigorous and unreasonable; --- This must needs be a very wrong method of entering a man into so sacred an office, where all prevarication and hypocrisy, all trifling with oaths and subscriptions ought industriously to be avoided.

The requiring of every man that has any place of burthen, or trust, or profit, under the government, to qualifie himself by taking the Lord's supper (that solemn ordinance which

which our Lord himself appointed with quite another purpose) is one of those abominations, those national sins for which the land mourns. These I call *national vices*, because they are established by law, and are grievances, which all wise and good men must (I suppose) wish to see redressed.

There are other laws of such a nature, that I should be glad to see them also repealed; but I will mention no more of them at present. And some, perhaps, will think that I have already mentioned too many.

As to that luxury and extravagance in all kinds; that horrible cursing and profane swearing which are so often heard in our streets; the various kinds of lewdness and debauchery; the drunkenness and gluttony; the theft and robbery, and all manner of fraud and dishonesty; the gaming and prodigality; the prophaning the Lord's day, and the neglect and contempt of divine worship, both in public and private; the little concern which appears in many parents and masters of families to keep their children and servants under due restraints and regulations, and to instruct them in the principles of religion and virtue; the headstrong, ungovernable and licentious behavior of youth, who set their hearts on scarce any thing but dress and pleasure, gaiety and endless diversions; the spreading of enthusiasm on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, which mutually cause or occasion
one

Objections against days of fasting

one another; --- these are things which one cannot, on such an occasion, forbear to take notice of and most heartily lament. And it is a thing greatly to be wished, that the guilty would amend, and so prevent the judgments of heaven from falling on a guilty land, and save themselves from the wrath to come.

The nations, with which we are now engaged in war, have (it must be confessed) greater abominations in the midst of them; such as most dreadful persecutions in matters of religion, established by their laws, and executed with the greatest rigor. The restless pride of one of the courts to make kings of the younger sons of the family; and the boundless ambition of the other, to gain and establish an universal monarchy, to give laws to the nations, and to make the fate of *Europe* to depend upon the nod of their *grand monarch*; --- these are vices from which (blessed be God) our land is free. I should think the perfidy and boundless ambition of the latter were enough to excite all the nations around them to join in one common confederacy, in order to destroy their power and capacity to molest the neighboring nations any more. One would think the treachery of that nation, and the late behavior to which they have instigated one of their allies, would render them the abhorrence and detestation of mankind, as common enemies, and the grand dis-

disturbers of the peace and tranquility of Europe.

We are now fighting for our laws and for our liberties, for our friends and families, and for our dear native country. May the guilty be prevailed upon to repent of their sins, and the righteous persevere in their integrity! May almighty God pour down the best of blessings upon our most gracious king and all his royal family! May he grant understanding to our counsellors, and teach our senators wisdom! May he inspire with steddiness and unanimity, with conduct and bravery, our fleets and our armies, our auxiliaries and allies; and may the blessing of heaven attend us in all our just and lawful undertakings! And finally, may we be favored, in due time, with a safe, honorable and lasting peace and tranquility! Then will our trade revive and flourish, our fields yield their increase, and there will be no room for complaining in our streets. Then will the divine protection be the glory of our land; and upon all that glory there will be a defence.

But, whether national sins be repented of, or no; and temporal success denied, or granted; every truly pious, penitent and righteous person may depend upon acceptance and success hereafter; and may hope (thro' the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ) to be delivered from death, and to enter

D

into

Objections against days of fasting

into the land of perfect peace and everlasting felicity, where neither wars nor rumors of wars can reach or disturb him any more.

—And God grant that we may all of us finally attain to the blessedness of that happy world, Amen!

The E N D.



BOOKS sold by J. NOON, at the White Hart, near Mercer's-Chapel, Cheapside; J. DAVIDSON, at the Angel, in the Poultry; R. KING, at the Bible and Crown, in Fore-Street; and J. WAUGH, at the Turk's-Head in Grace-church-Street.

I. *TWO Letters to a Friend*: The first concerning the End and Design of Prayer, or the Reasonableness of praying to an unchangeably wise, powerful, and good God. In Answer to the Objections of the late Earl of *Rochester*, Mr. *Blount*, and other modern Deists.

To the first Letter is added, the 30th Dissertation of *Maximus Tyrius*, translated from the Greek, concerning this Question, "Whether we ought to pray to God, or no?" With Remarks upon it.

The second Letter, The Doctrine of Predestination review'd; or, The Nature of the Counsels and Decrees of God; and the Rise and Occasion of the Scripture-Language concerning them. The *Second Edition* corrected and enlarged. Price 1 s.

II. The History of the first planting the Christian Religion, taken from the *Acts of the Apostles* and their *Epistles*: Together with the remarkable Facts of the *Jewish* and *Roman* History which affected the Christians within this Period. In two Vols. 4to. Price of the two Vols. stitched, 14 s.

III. A Sermon, in Defence of universal Liberty and free Inquiry. Pr. 6 d.

IV. A Sermon on the Excellence of moral Duties above positive Institutions. Price 6 d.

V. A brief Account of *Calvin's* burning *Servetus* for an *Heretic*. Pr. 4 d.

VI. The Reasonableness of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, as delivered in the Scriptures. Being
an

BOOKS Sold by, &c.

an Answer to a late Treatise, intitl'd *Christianity not founded on Argument*. In three Parts. Part I. Contains the Arguments for the Truth of the Christian Religion. Part II. The Answers to the Difficulties and Objections propos'd by this Author. Part III. An Interpretation of the Texts, which he hath perverted. Price stich'd, 3 s.

These six by GEORGE BENSON, D. D.

VII. A Paraphrase and Notes upon St. Paul's Epistles to

Philemon,	}	{	1 Timothy,
1 Thessalonians,			Titus,
2 Thessalonians,			2 Timothy,

Attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. To which are annexed *Critical Dissertations* on several Subjects, for the better Understanding St. Paul's Epistles. Price bound, 14 s.

VIII. A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of St. James, attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. With a *Dissertation* on James ii. 14, —20. or an *Essay* to reconcile what St. Paul hath said, concerning Men's being *justified by Faith*, with what St. James hath said concerning their being *justified by Works*. Price stich'd, 3 s. 6 d.

IX. A Paraphrase and Notes on the first Epistle of St. Peter. Attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. With an *Essay* to explain what is meant by *Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison*: Or a *Dissertation* on 1 Peter iii. 17, &c. Price stich'd, 4 s.

X. A Paraphrase and Notes on the second Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude. Attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. Price stich'd, 4 s.

These four by the same AUTHOR.

